

Three Count.

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WWF title upheld, Roberts slaps Elizabeth in Tuesday in Texas pay-per-view

In a decision that won't be known to fans until the weekend of 12/7, the World Wrestling Federation title was upheld Dec. 3 at Tuesday in Texas, a World Wrestling Federation pay-per-view show emanating from the Freeman Coliseum in San Antonio, Tx.

The other major angle on the five-match card saw more heat added to the feud between **Randy Savage** and **Jake Roberts**, with Roberts slapping **The Lovely Elizabeth** after yanking her by the hair.

Results of the card:

- There was no pre-show countdown for this WWF show, but the interview with **The Undertaker** that closed the Survivor Series show 11/27 was shown at the beginning of the show. When I called my cable company (Cox Cable of Gainesville) to order the 12/3 show, it was advertised as "Survivor Series. Cost is \$12.95."

1. **Bret Hart** made **Skinner** (Steve Keirn) submit to the scorpion deathlock in roughly a 15-minute match. This was a very solid opener, with Skinner looking the best I have seen him since entering the WWF. I am amazed at how the WWF is able to get Hart so over to the fans. He's been with the group for so long, and in a tag-team role, that I figured his role as Intercontinental Champion would be meaningless. Instead, while Hart is not a drawing card, he stands out among the mix of WWF wrestlers.

2. Savage pinned Roberts with an elbow drop off the top rope. Roberts, who has quickly become my favorite heel wrestler, had a great pre-match interview. Okerlund was interviewing Savage, when the Macho Man ran out to attack Roberts on his way to ringside. Savage went through the first two-minute sequence, including a jump off the top rope, with his gaudy looking green cowboy hat on his head. Roberts worked over Savage's "injured" arm when he had the advantage. The bandage on Savage's arm appeared to have a blood stain, which got the injury even more over. Finish came when Roberts missed a move and Savage quickly administered his elbow drop.

After the match, though, is where the fun really started. Roberts DDT'd Savage after the match, and began to walk away. But en route to the dressing room, Roberts stopped, came back and administered another

DDT. He also plucked out a small bag from underneath the ring, which most fans thought was a snake, and continually threatened to pull a snake out of the bag. Liz came flying out of the dressing room and into the ring to protect Savage. Throughout the whole time she was in the ring, Roberts verbally abused Savage to Liz. Roberts then picked Savage up again and administered a third DDT. As Liz begged for mercy, Roberts pulled her up by her and slapped her (There was no way Roberts touched her, but the sequence came off great). Finally, WWF figurehead president **Jack Tunney** came out, forcing Roberts to leave. On his way out, Roberts yelled that there wasn't a snake in the bag. If this feud doesn't draw now, I don't know what's left for the WWF to do.

3. **The British Bulldog** defeated **The Warlord** with a small package. Just the match to show if the WWF wants to talk about how serious its steroid testing policy is. In retrospect, after watching the match the first time, the only thing I could remember is Warlord holding a full-nelson that seemed like 20 minutes. It wasn't a bad match. And, surprise, surprise, both Warlord and Davey Boy looked a little bit smaller.

4. **Ted DiBiase-Repo Man** defeated **Virgil-El Matador** in another solid bout. This was the first time I got to see Repo Man, and I had no idea who it was at first glance. I thought either **Jamison** was stalking behind DiBiase, or **Vince McMahon** had introduced the cookie thief from the Cookie Crisp cereal commercials I watched as a kid.

5. **Hulk Hogan** pinned **The Undertaker** to "regain" the WWF title. This was basically the same match as last time, with tons of restholds. Hogan was working this match with a jammed neck sustained from their encounter at Survivor Series. Finish came when Hogan was making a comeback and **Ric Flair** hastily walked toward ringside. Flair and Tunney (who was at ringside to monitor this match) got into an argument. Hogan charged outside the ring, grabbed a chair and hit Flair in the back with a weak-looking blow. Flair then tackled Tunney, knocking him senseless. As Tunney struggled to regain his senses a few minutes later, Hogan unscrewed The 'Taker's urn and threw ashes in his face, leading to the pinfall. After the match as Hogan posed, a camera showed Tunney and the referee arguing as they

headed back toward the dressing room.

That is because the title will be upheld by Tunney the weekend of 12/3, with the winner of the Royal Rumble pay-per-view show Jan. 19 claiming the championship. Bet the farm on Flair winning the title there, and dropping it to Hogan at Wrestlemania VIII.

Notes: A really good show from start to finish, which makes up for the lousy Survivors telecast. I give it an 8 out of 10, and didn't score it higher because the show was only 90 minutes, with interviews filling up about 10 of those minutes. I bet some people are angry at the shows brevity, especially because no one was quite sure what they ordered (I was given a completely different lineup a few months back).

However McMahon can get away with an occasional screw-job finish, because they are so few and far between. That is the big difference between the WWF and WCW. The WWF gives clean finishes to its matchups, and always has a conclusive victory (almost always by the babyfaces) in the main event. People leave happy. In WCW, everything has an inconclusive finish. I don't feel McMahon will be hurt by attempting to promote three pay-per-view shows in the manner he has – with one leading to angles on another.

I also found it interesting how much almost all WWF wrestlers have shrunk in recent weeks. I am baffled. Is McMahon serious about eliminating anabolic steroid use in his federation? Or is this a temporary thing until the media goes away and the WWF can claim it is a steroid-free organization? Or is it too late, as fans will accuse the WWF as being steroid pushers on the first accusations from a former WWF star who is experiencing health problems because of prolonged steroid use? The next few weeks will be interesting. One thing I do like that McMahon has done is the introduction of more costumed wrestlers. No one can really tell how much Savage has shrunk in the two-piece wrestling attire he wears. It's also hard to judge the size of Repo Man, The Mountie and Skinner (even though Repo's beer belly is pretty evident). The next few weeks will be interesting in regards to steroids, especially with the growing possibility Florida will have a mandatory steroid test should a bill pass through the state legislature in January.

Other speculation I hear is that McMahon is considering eliminating mid-week house shows in favor of promoting either a weekly or monthly pay-per-view special. If that is the case, I think it would be a major mistake if he did. There is too much "good" WWF wrestling on cable and free television as it is, and trying to book fresh angles that frequently would result in a poorer product. I also believe the buy rates for the WWF's other pay-per-view shows would drop. I do understand, though, that as more pay-per-view events outside of wrestling become available, the number of curiosity buys wrestling PPVs receive will diminish.

World Championship Wrestling

While some WCW stars appeared on the Bruise Cruise from Nov. 30 to Dec. 6, the promotion thought promoting B-team shows in Florida would be a good way for all those stranded wrestlers to spend their week. Big mistake. Crowds were absolutely dismal the first leg of the tour, with St. Petersburg drawing 1,100 fans on 11/29, Belle Glade had 500 fans at an afternoon show 11/30 (Tyree Pride was drawing 250 fans weekly for his little independent shows, drawing mostly Haitian migrant workers) and Key West a disastrous 450 on 12/1 (what a great way to send these guys off on a cruise). Sunrise on 12/2 did not fare any better (results and crowd figures can be found in our Results section on Page 5). 12/3 in Fort Pierce only did 350 fans paid, and 12/5 in Melbourne had 450 fans paid for about a \$4,600 gate. When WCW ran a show headlined by Sting vs. **The Black Scorpion** in October 1990, Melbourne sold out with 1,700 fans to the tune of \$17,000.

Some quick news from the Florida swing. Sting caught the flu, and missed the Fort Pierce main event. Van Hammer took Sting's place against Cactus Jack, and I heard the match was pretty bad. Kudos to WCW, though, for posting signs announcing Sting's illness, and offering a five-minute period for refunds before the matches began. Johnny B. Badd also missed some dates after catching the flu on WCW's promotional tour in England. I understand Badd spent many days in only his wrestling trunks in 40-degree weather.

P.N. News is having a major problem stemming from the Bruise Cruise, which has caused him to miss shows in Melbourne and Perry. News' wife went with him on the cruise. Upon attempting to re-enter the U.S., she experienced problems with her immigration papers (News' wife is Austrian). They told News (Paul Neu) that if her papers weren't in order within 48 hours, she would be deported to Austria.

The next time WCW swings through Florida, there will likely be newspaper, radio and television advertisements to plug the shows. WCW event coordinators receive a new advertising budget in January. One source close to the company said WCW executive vice president Jim Herd went over the budget earlier in the year, prompting Ted Turner to freeze all WCW spending in that department.

The WWF begins a swing through the South in January with television tapings in Daytona Beach, Fort Myers and Dothan, Ala. Those buildings each seat less than 5,000 fans, which is an interesting departure from the large venues the WWF usually books for tapings.

Other WCW tidbits: I understand many WCW wrestlers were very angry with the Bruise Cruise, many with a desire to bruise Wayne Coulter, the WCW public

relations flak who put this deal together. Coulter and several other WCW front-office employees received luxury suites on the cruise, while the wrestlers received rooms reserved for the passengers, which were quite small. Lex Luger received one such room, and even though he was on the cruise for just one day, there were odds being taken he would throw Coulter overboard for sticking him with a room he couldn't even change clothes in. One WCW employee told me Herd would have been on the cruise, but he knew he was going to be thrown overboard, so he stayed on land. I also understand the cruise was comprised of 80 percent females, but the wrestlers were disappointed, because 100 percent of them were not good looking. Ironically, I asked a few years ago why WCW didn't try promoting a special package for it's hard-core fans during its pay-per-view shows. Herd responded that WCW doesn't want to do such things, because it is not a travel agency. So much for continuity ... Lou Perez is reportedly heading in to form a tag-team with Marcus Alexander Bagwell. That just about insures Bagwell won't get over ... Belated congratulations to Alexandra York (Terry Boatwright) and Dustin Rhodes, who were recently engaged. Last word is York finishes with WCW in about two weeks ... WCW will be promoting shows in early January when most of its crew heads to Japan for the 1/4 Tokyo Dome show in conjunction with New Japan Pro Wrestling. I believe the dates are scheduled for Alabama and North Florida.

Three Count readers Alfonso Barreiro, John Patton and I attended a show 12/6 in Perry at the National Guard Armory, which is located in the pan-handle about 75 minutes northwest of Gainesville and 40 miles east of Tallahassee. The crowd was about 650 people (gate about \$4,800), which was a success. In town that same night was a high school football game with the home team in the regional playoff, which had sold out. The crowd in the building was a very old-style crowd, cheering or the babies, booing the heels and popping for everything. I guess that was one of the things that made the show enjoyable. Also, posted at the ticket window was a sign that P.N. News was not going to appear and would be replaced by WCW jobber John Peterson. Later on, the announcement did not make any sense, but at least people knew News wouldn't be there.

1. Mike Graham defeated Peterson with a figure four leglock in eight minutes. Earlier that day, Graham bought a summer home in Perry, making him one of the most over babyfaces. Perry has an unemployment rate of 18 percent. A combination of the surroundings and Graham's methodical, technical wrestling style gave me flashbacks to shows of the 1970s. As Peterson left after the match, one burly individual in back of us said, "That guy got paid \$250 for that. I should be in there." Grade: C-.

2. Arachniman (Brad Armstrong) pinned Terry

Taylor with a roll up. This was a fantastic match, which shocked the living daylights out of me. Taylor was announced as the computerized wrestler of the 1990s, which seemed pretty ironic in Perry. They did a spot where Taylor began chastising referee Nick Patrick until finally Patrick bodyslammed Taylor, which got a huge response. The finish came when Patrick caught Taylor using the ropes for leverage on a pin attempt. As Taylor and Patrick argued, Arachniman rolled him up. York was not in attendance (and was not advertised as being there). Someone should tell Herd that hard-core fans don't disapprove of gimmicks to draw children, like Arachniman. They just get upset when there is a lousy wrestler behind the gimmick. Grade: B+.

3. Steve Austin defeated Firebreaker Chip in about 12 minutes. Lady Blossom (Jeannie Adams) is gone from WCW and did not appear as advertised. This had all the qualities you would expect from these two. Austin carried the match very well. Chip missed a sequence consisting of a bodyslam and dropkick. Austin's ponytail came undone, this time at the four minute mark. Austin also took a slam on the concrete, which showed me something, because this was a spot show in Perry. Finish came when Austin pinned Chip after a hotshot, holding his tights. Grade: B-.

4. Big Van Vader defeated P.N. News via forfeit. Vader came out and posed until News' theme music played. Then referee Mike Atkins ran out and explained to Patrick that News wasn't there, causing the forfeit. Ring announcer Tony Gillam explained News was having "travel problems." Vader then got on the microphone and ran down News, calling him a coward, etc. I think that's pretty stupid, considering P.N. News is being pushed as a top act, and Vader rarely appears in WCW. The reason Vader didn't wrestle was because of a serious bout with the flu. Vader's face looked awful.

5. The match began as Patriot Todd against Oz, but evolved to a tag match between Todd and Chip against Austin and Oz, which ended in a double disqualification when both teams would not stop fighting in the ring. Oz is going to receive my vote as worst wrestler of the year. He's been in the business or more than a year now, and still can hardly lock up. Even Van hammer has more versatility and screws up less (more on Hammer later). Chip came to ringside at about the five-minute mark, but was sent back to the dressing room. Austin then came to ringside and began pummeling Todd when he was thrown to the floor. That brought Chip out, and a hot four-way melee ensued. Patrick ordered the match become a tag-team affair, which I thought was a god booking decision. Fans chanted "USA" at Oz. I guess the Emerald City is somewhere in Iceland. Grade: C-.

6. After an intermission, Van Hammer defeated Cactus Jack in a good 12-minute match. Say what you
(Continued on Page 8)

Letters

Dear Alex,

I thought Survivor Series was a very good show, rating an 8 out of 10. I feel it was probably the best Survivor's yet. I have a couple of questions stemming from the show:

1. Do the wrestlers have any say in the outcome of the matches? For example, did Hulk Hogan have any say in his loss to The Undertaker?

2. Will I.R.S. turn babyface? And will Shawn Michaels turn heel?

3. I heard on the *Paul Harvey Radio Show* that in a match in Atlanta (I'm not sure of the federation) the wrestlers did not follow the planned match, and a referee broke his neck. He is filing a lawsuit in Atlanta, and a court in Atlanta is deciding whether or not wrestling is entertainment or sport. Can I have some more information on this?

4. Is there any way you would know what the theme entrance music is on the WWF's Fan Club 1992 cassette?

5. Are any WWF pay-per-view events scheduled for the Florida area next year?

6. Where was the Gobbledy Gooker?

— Robbie Bloom, Longwood, Fla.

AM: In the WWF, no wrestler has a say in the outcome of their match except for Hogan. Wrestlers who are insubordinate are either fired or buried in preliminary matches. Hogan can call his own shots, but usually agrees with the angles Vince McMahon and Pat Patterson devise. I understand Hogan put a nix to dropping the WWF title immediately after this Summer Slam. The WWF front-office asked for the move, because Hogan was taking seven weeks off to film a movie.

2. I never expect I.R.S. to turn baby, because the character simply doesn't allow for it. WWF television has indicated Michaels would turn heel, and Marty Janetty would remain a baby, but after watching Survivor's, I'm not so sure that's the plan. I think Michaels would be better off as the baby, but McMahon hasn't exactly contacted me for my opinion.

3. Harvey was referring to a lawsuit filed by Tommy Young, the best referee in wrestling history. While working for WCW in December of 1989, Young sustained a severe spinal injury in a match between Tommy Rich and Mike Rotunda. The lights at the Center Stage studio in Atlanta inexplicably turned off, and Rich accidentally hit Young in the back of the head. Young has since been out of the wrestling business, because a return could result in permanent paralysis if he was hit in the wrong way. Young is suing Center Stage and Rich, even though WCW could have prevented this whole fiasco had they given Young a front-office job.

4. I have no idea about that theme music. If any readers do, please let me know.

5. There are currently no WWF PPV events scheduled for Florida. The Royal Rumble emanates from Utica, N.Y., and Wrestlemania VIII is from Indianapolis. The WWF is doing a television taping Jan. 7 in Daytona Beach and Jan. 8 in Fort Myers.

6. The Gooker (Hector Guerrero) has apparently returned to his egg forever. The idea didn't work as well as McMahon thought it would, but he was bright enough to pull the plug on it fairly quickly.

Dear Alex,

I am really looking forward to the American Wrestling Federation television taping Dec. 15 in Newark (which was detailed in the Nov. 23 issue of *Three Count*). It looks like a great card, even if half the guys advertised show up. I watched Survivor Series, and gave it a 6. Ric Flair doesn't need anyone to talk for him, like Mr. Perfect does. It diminishes his appeal. I agree with you 100 percent on that one.

— Art Peluso, Belleville, N.J.

Dear Alex,

Here's some information on Roberta Miller regarding her letter in Numbers 9-10 of *Three Count* about the old Championship Wrestling show. I used to watch it on WUAB (Ch. 43) 23 years ago when I was in junior high.

"Championship Wrestling" was hosted by Jack Reynolds and Johnny Powers, then later with Tex McKenzie on Saturday nights from 7-8 p.m. on Ch. 43. Pedro Martinez was the match maker (as he was referred to), and his son, Ron, was the ring announcer.

Today, those two run P.M. Film and Video Tape Company Inc., 1905 North Atlantic Blvd., Suite E-5D, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33305 (305-584-8721). They have video tapes of the old shows you can buy. It's a great trip down memory lane. It's been a while since I've heard of them, though, so I hope they're still in business.

Powers was (and may still be) involved in real estate. I believe he has returned to Canada. I last saw him wrestle in 1983 against Dick "The Bulldog" Brower, who is still around either managing or tag-teaming with his son. Ernie "The Cat" Ladd was doing some color commentary with the WWF in the 1980s. Kurt Von Hess was "Wild" Bill Tarry from Canada, who came out one Saturday to announce he was now Von Hess, a German-style heel.

— Bob Stascak, Elyria, OH

AM: Thanks for the response. I believe P.M. Video is still open, but if any *Three Count* readers know for sure, please let me know.

Advertisements

Art Peluso of 224 Washington Ave., Belleville, N.J. 07109, is looking for a copy of Ric Flair's match against Bobby Eaton from a July showing of WCW's Main Event. The match has Flair getting knocked outside of the ring, staring at the camera and falling down.

A quick zip code correction from last time. Ron Lemieux's *Arena Report* newsletter is available at P.O. Box 952547, Lake Mary, Fla., 32795-2547. Cost is \$1 for each bi-weekly issue.

Desire any wrestling memorabilia? Interested in video tape of old matches or those from other parts of the country or world? Advertise here for free for subscribers only at P.O. Box 12795, Gainesville, Fla. 32604-0795. I'm also looking for results and/or analysis of matches from other arts of the country. Please send them to the above address.

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Results

Mike Rosenthal of Miami, Fla., attended a WCW card Dec. 2 at the Sunrise Musical Theater. The following is his report:

1. Tom Zenk pinned John Peterson with a cross-body block off the top rope in 4:00. The match was originally billed as Zenk vs. Big Van Vader. Peterson, a TBS jobber, wore trunks with "Kiss my..." on them. Grade: D.

2. Brian Pillman defeated Mike Graham after a belly-to-back suplex in 9:15. Graham was a substitute for Johnny B. Badd (Editor's note: Badd was on a tour of England at the time; Mike tells me Badd's name was posted at the box office as not appearing. Dave Meltzer of *The Wrestling Observer Newsletter* said that Sunrise is the only city in the country WCW has recently advertised when the talent will not appear as announced, which I guess means my column in *The Miami Herald* has earned respect as a fan's watchdog). Theodore R. Long wasn't there either. Grade: C.

3. The Patriots defeated The Young Pistols in 10:00. The Pistols play their heel role really well. Finish came when Tracey had Todd pinned, but the referee was distracted. Chip entered the ring and dropped an elbow on Tracey, allowing Todd to roll over and gain the pin.

Grade: B-.

4. Madusa pinned Bambi in 6:30 after a dropkick off the middle rope. Solid work, but no one cared. Grade: C.

5. Van Hammer pinned Badstreet in 9:00. Yes, Badstreet (Brad Armstrong) is still being used on road shows, and was billed as 1/3 of The Fabulous Freebirds, which was funny because The 'Birds are babies. Hammer has improved, but there were way too many restholds in this match. Hammer did not bring his guitar to the ring (Editor's note: Two months back at a house show, Rick Steiner put vaseline on Hammer's guitar strap before his match. Hammer came out swinging the guitar around his neck, lost control and hit himself in the eye. As a result, he missed two dates). Grade: D.

6. Dustin Rhodes topped Oz in 7:00. There was a lot of WWF-style stalling. I can't remember the finish, because I was taking a catnap. Grade: D-.

7. Van Vader and The Diamond Studd defeated The Freebirds in 6:30 when Studd pinned Jimmy Garvin. Grade: B-.

8. Sting pinned Cactus Jack in 8:00 after a school-boy cradle. If the match would have gone longer, it would have been great. Jack got suplexed on the concrete, and was tossed from the stage level at Sunrise to the seats about four feet below. After the bout, Jack hit himself with the ringside table three times and threw chairs in the ring. Grade: B, because it was too short.

Notes: The attendance was only 225 people, and I know by counting them (Editor's note: I heard the paid attendance was only 225 fans plus 75 complimentary tickets, which is by far the lowest crowd WCW has ever drawn in South Florida). The only wrestlers who were over were Sting and The 'Birds. If WCW is to ever re-establish itself in South Florida, it must: A) Improve its syndicated television situation (The only WCW syndicated show -- World Wide Wrestling -- is telecast at 6 a.m. Sundays); B) Make the entire card known to local fans; C) Take out some newspaper or radio advertising; D) Stop sending the B-team to Miami.

Bob Stascak of Elyria, Ohio attended a WWF card Nov. 22 at the Richfield Coliseum in Richfield, OH. The following is his report:

1. El Matador d. Colonel Mustafa in 11:30; 2. The British Bulldog d. The Barbarian in 11:30; 3. The Warlord d. Greg Valentine in 13:01; 4. Ted DiBiase-I.R.S. d. Big Boss Man-Virgil in 12:12; 5. The Nasty Boys d. The Bushwhackers in 11:14; 6. Bret Hart d. The Mountie in 11:47; 7. Hulk Hogan d. Ric Flair via countout in 12:15. This much-awaited match was a disappointment. Hogan sold nothing, and Curt Hennig did nothing at ringside.

Spotlight on: Bart Vale

Miami resident Bart Vale may be known to few wrestling fans in the United State. But in Japan, Vale has become one of the top American wrestlers in the form of "shooting," a combination of submission holds, karate and amateur wrestling. Vale currently wrestles for Pro Wrestling Fujiwara in Japan, and wrestled for the famous Universal Wrestling Federation during its existence from 1988-90.

Vale currently owns seven dojos in South Florida, and has attempted to introduce "shooting" to some of his students, conducting small tournaments and training sessions. However, Vale's biggest challenge may lie ahead. He is attempting to promote a PWF show March 20 or 21 at the Knight Center in Miami. The PWF's top Japanese stars (Yoshiaki Fujiwara, Masaharu Funaki and ... Fukai) along with Americans Jerry "Superfoot" Flynn and Vince Turelli (a.k.a. Ken Shamrock) would appear on the show. The biggest obstacle may be educating U.S. fans as to what submission-style wrestling is. Vale discusses that, and other topics in this interview.

AM: Could you please talk a bit about what you are trying to promote, and some of the talent that is involved?

BV: We are trying to promote shoot-fighting matches where the Japanese fight the Americans in America, rather than on their own soil. Talent that will appear includes Masaharu Funaki, Minoru Suzuki, Yoshiaki Fukai and possibly Yoshiaki Fujiwara. I know Fujiwara would at least appear. There would be some other Japanese boys from the school there also. Among the Americans would be Jerry Flynn, Willie Wilkinson, Ken Shamrock and maybe Duane Koslowski.

AM: How do you promote this sport to an audience that has never seen something like this before?

BV: Very carefully. I think there is a need for a different type of sport, because wrestling is taking a dive. Kick boxing has not gotten off the ground, because it is so boring and there no good promoters. There are just little groups putting shows together in bars. I think if promoted correctly, shoot fighting has the chance to get off the ground. It combines Mui Thai kick boxing with submission grappling, which I think can draw both karate and wrestling fans. I think I could have 600 fans show up just to watch me fight. Sammy (Masami Soranaka; the PWF's envoy for American talent; wrestled for the defunct Global Wrestling Federation in Florida as V.C. Minh) said if we draw 3,000 people, it would be a major success. We're going to have someone down here video taping, and we want to try and get television coverage, too.

AM: You have discussed the possibility of running shoot-style shows in the U.S. before. Why did it take more than two years to get this organized?

BV: I'm the type of person who really goes for things. And after a while, I was finally able to talk Sammy into it. Now, I'm looking for sponsors to help with the show. I feel this will be a good thing. I've started running my own tournaments in my karate schools down here, and it's going pretty well. I'm going to try and make it a little bigger as the months go by.

AM: Do you have any students who have the potential to wrestle in Japan?

BV: Sammy is thinking of taking over a couple of them to Japan. Some of them have the ability, but are too small. But those guys can put on a good show while the Japanese are here in the states. I'm working constantly to try and educate some people inside the karate world about shoot fighting.

AM: How does shoot fighting compare to karate?

BV: It fits right in there. There are a lot of techniques that can bring an opponent down to the ground, but they end there. They leave you in a position where a guy can take you down. Now, we've opened up the second door about what to do if you are on the ground, or if someone you've taken down is getting it up. My students are eating it up. It is the missing link in the martial arts system. My system, ju-jitsu, supposedly had these techniques originally. But as the art was passed from one instructor to the other, they didn't see the same need for ground fighting, and eventually, the system was lost. Every body knows that if you get into a real fight, you're going to end up on the ground. Rocky V saw a perfect example of that. That was about two guys who are pro boxers, taught never to go down on the ground. That scene opened the door for people to say it's OK to fight on the floor.

AM: How has the karate world taken to shoot fighting?

BV: So far, they all love it. I've spent the last two years doing seminars on it. The last one was at Al Tracey's dojo in Lexington Ky. He must have had 30-40 black belts there, each with their own schools. And because of that, many of them want me to come up for seminars.

AM: Many wrestling fans remember shoot fighting from the Universal Wrestling Federation in Japan. Does the shooting style with the PWF differ from that group?

BV: What's happening is things are getting more and more realistic. It's to the point where you have to be in good condition when you go in. You have to be a good fighter and know how to take a shot, because everything thrown isn't being pulled. It's on the money.

I love it, because it was always my fault when I hit people too hard. I didn't really know the wrestling too well then, but I'm learning. In the last fight we did, I did a belly-to-back suplex that almost knocked Fukai out. I surprised everybody, because the move looked really good.

AM: With the UWF splitting into three separate groups, and most of the main-eventers going their separate ways, are you surprised at the success all three groups are having?

BV: I knew the groups would do OK. I can tell from the shows we get a solid reaction and people are enthused to see the fighters. I think more people want to see us out of the three groups that resulted because of the split. Akira Maeda's group is based on Maeda. The other group (UWFI) usually has Nobuhiko Takada and Kazuo Yamazaki on top. Our group has Fujiwara, Suzuki and Funaki. When we were one group, these were the six fighters everyone wanted to see. Now, the

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-- Bart Vale

PWF has three of the six, which makes us a bigger group. If you split the pie three different ways, there's not as much to go around. But we're giving good shows, and the fighters are in good condition.

AM: You had told me this summer the shoot fighting in PWF rings was getting very snug (physical). Could you explain why?

BV: The conditioning is different. We're being trained, not just being told what we should be doing. We get in there and have to do the squats, push-ups and sit-ups. Before, most guys did them, but they did them on their own. With this group, you do things as a group. You get into the ring work in the morning and work-out until lunch at 2. You rest and digest until 5, and then you're back training until 9. Sometimes, you're just kicking all that time. When you're in the ring, you're not just showing wrestling, but the combination of every technique together. It's a lot better group, and we seem to be tighter. In the UWF, there was a lot of friction between people arguing about who was supposed to do what. The top guys were pissed off at the top guys, and no one was ever there training. You would go in and do your own workout with students. After a while of doing that, I started wondering. It was like anything you do when there are 15 bosses. It becomes a problem. Every-

one had their own idea of what we were supposed to be doing. The UWF split, because the top guys realized they were all bosses. It was tough, but I think we got the better end of the deal.

AM: Who runs the show in the PWF?

BV: Fujiwara and Sammy. And it's done really well. You know what's going on, and don't have to second guess what you do. Before, no one was ever quite sure who called the show. It always seemed to be a different guy. It almost always seemed like Maeda was, but at times he wasn't. It was strange. Now, everyone is working toward the same goal.

AM: Who is the best fighter in this style?

BV: I can't say from the other groups. I saw some of their matches, and they looked pretty good. The best overall fighter that I know of would be Funaki. He's young, built strong and is still learning. He doesn't realize he's reached the top, which is important for a fighter. That was the thing Mike Tyson had going for him for a long time. Tyson would go out, knock out and opponent and begin training again. That's what Funaki does. He knows he can do it, but the next day, he's back in the gym learning and training. That's important. Too many fighters, like Maeda and Takada, started getting heavy and fat after they were on top, which means they are training less in the gym. Then they don't give good matches, because their stamina and condition is no good and they get hurt too easy. That happens to all good fighters when they reach the top. Right now, Funaki hasn't gotten there yet. He's a good fighter, and continues training for that level.

AM: How do you counter the communication problem with the Japanese in your group?

BV: We're able to speak. I've learned a little Japanese, and they have learned a little bit of English. Most of the time, if some one doesn't understand, you show them something. It helps when Sammy is there, though. There is a young boy named Toi, who hopefully will make his debut by the beginning of next year, who lived in the States and learned English pretty well. He translates also.

AM: Is there a communication problem in the ring?

BV: There is no conversation in the ring. Nothing at all.

AM: Finally, with the show in Miami, how do you keep from being classified as a pro wrestling off shoot?

BV: We're not going to be called anything to do with pro wrestling. Shoot fighting has a wrestling background, but the same thing applies with kick boxing same thing. We've pulled away from boxing, and we've pulled away from wrestling, because the kicking and punching make things a little different. If you do the sport as a shoot, people understand.

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want about Hammer, but the guy is getting better and is at least trying. He stood in the back for the first four matches watching pretty intently. He also didn't screw up any spots in this match, which was just as good as their bout Nov. 19 at the Clash of Champions. Hammer also received a great reaction throughout the match. Jack was fantastic, hitting himself with a chair and catching his spittle in his mouth after shooting it 15 feet in the air. There weren't too many crazy bumps, but the work was solid. After Jack had the advantage for a while, the guy in back of us said, "When I grow up, I want to be like Cactus Jack." Finish came when Jack brought a chair in the ring, but got into a tug-of-war with referee Atkins for it, prompting Hammer to successfully score the roll-up. After the match, Hammer threw a chair at Jack outside the ring. On his way to the dressing room, Jack told road agent Grizzly Smith, "You saw that. Fine him \$500." Smith snickered. Grade: B.

7. Rick-Scott Steiner defeated The Enforcers in a hilarious 15 minutes. Mostly comedy, with Rick Steiner doing a crotch shot on Larry Zbyszko and biting Arn Anderson in the butt. Anderson and Zbyszko, though, are simply fantastic. I think WCW is making a big mistake by splitting up The Enforcers, and teaming Bobby Eaton with Anderson. Rick was in most of the way. Scott gained the pin on Anderson after a short clothesline. Grade: B.

Notes: The show was a fund-raiser for Taylor County High School's ROTC program, with \$1 of each ticket going to their fund. The original card had Dustin Rhodes vs. Oz and Brian Pillman vs. Austin, but the Bruise Cruise changed all that. Luger and Mr. Hughes were to wrestle the Steiners in the main event and The Freebirds vs. the Steiners was the semi-main, but that was changed early last month when Luger was yanked from all small spot shows because of his contract. No posters, though, were ever made with that match advertised. Matches billed on the program insert included, "WCW Patriot #1 vs Oz, and WCW Patriot #2 vs. Steve Austin." And in case your wondering, Taylor County High won the football game, defeating Jacksonville Bolles, 6-3.

This is the first issue of the month of December. The next issue will be mailed 12/4, and will have an update on the state of Florida's attempt to regulate pro wrestling, an editorial on WCW's new "Late Breaking News..." newsletter, a live report from Jacksonville and, hopefully, an interview with "Superstar" Billy Graham. The new format will go into effect with the new newsletter. I decided it was more important to get the information in this issue mailed on 12/7 than make the format appear nicer. Subscription rates continue on the upswing, so please tell your friends. Good luck on your holiday shopping

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3 issues remaining